CLAIMS

1. A flavor precursor composition comprising as an active ingredient a flavor precursor compound (flavor precursor compound A) in which a volatile flavor compound having a mercapto group in the molecule and a non-volatile compound having a mercapto group in the molecule are bound to form a disulfide structure, or a flavor precursor compound (flavor precursor compound B) which is an organic compound represented by Formula (1) shown below in which R^1H is a non-volatile compound and R^2H is a volatile compound having in the molecule a furan ring structure (including a structure where part or all of the carbon-carbon double bonds thereof are hydrogenated) or a thiophene ring structure (including a structure where part or all of the carbon-carbon double bonds thereof are hydrogenated), said Formula (1) being:

$$R^1-(S)_n-R^2 \qquad (1)$$

wherein n represents an integer of 1 or 3, R^1H represents an organic compound having a structure in which the functional group R^1 is bound to a hydrogen atom and R^2H represents an organic compound having a structure in which the functional group R^2 is bound to a hydrogen atom.

2. The flavor precursor composition as set forth in Claim 1 wherein said non-volatile compound in said flavor

precursor compound A or B is a member selected from the group consisting of cysteine, homocysteine, γ-glutamylcysteine, glutathione and cysteinylglycine.

3. A method for releasing the flavor component from the flavor precursor composition as set forth in Claim 1 or 2 wherein the sulfide bond in said flavor precursor compound A or B is cleaved using a reducing compound.

4. A method for releasing the flavor component from the flavor precursor composition as set forth in Claim 1 or 2 wherein the sulfide bond in said flavor precursor compound A or B is cleaved using a compound exerting its reducing ability via a reversible reaction.

5. A method for releasing the flavor component from the flavor precursor composition as set forth in Claim 1 or 2 wherein the sulfide bond in said flavor precursor compound A or B is cleaved using a compound having a free mercapto group.

6. A method for releasing the flavor component from the flavor precursor composition as set forth in Claim 1 or 2 wherein the sulfide bond in said flavor precursor compound A or B is cleaved by heating.

7. A method for releasing the flavor component from the flavor precursor composition as set forth in Claim 1 or 2 wherein the sulfide bond in said flavor precursor compound A or B is cleaved by altering the pH.

8. A method for releasing the flavor component from the flavor precursor composition as set forth in Claim 1 or 2 wherein the sulfide bond in said flavor precursor compound A or B is cleaved by an electric reducing action.

9. A novel sulfide compound which is an organic compound represented by Formula (2) shown below in which R^1H is a non-volatile compound and R^2H is a volatile compound having in the molecule a furan ring structure (including a structure where part or all of the carbon-carbon double bonds thereof are hydrogenated) or a thiophene ring structure (including a structure where part or all of the carbon-carbon double bonds thereof are hydrogenated), said Formula (2) being:

$$R^1\text{—}(S)_m\text{—}R^2 \qquad (2)$$

wherein m represents an integer of 1 to 3, R^1H represents an organic compound having a structure in which the functional group R^1 is bound to a hydrogen atom and R^2H represents an organic compound having a structure in which the functional group R^2 is bound to a hydrogen atom.

10. The novel sulfide compound as set forth in Claim 9 wherein R^1 is identical to R which forms RSH which, in turn, represents a member selected from the group consisting of cysteine, homocysteine, glutathione, γ-glutamylcysteine and cysteinylglycine.

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